

Youth Component of the 2010 Comprehensive Plan



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
BACKGROUND	1
YOUTH SPACE	3
Youth believe that there is no place specifically set aside for teens.....	3
Youth tell us there is not a wide variety of entertainment.....	13
TRANSPORTATION	19
Hampton is oriented for auto traffic, not pedestrian or alternative transportation, so youth are overly dependent on cars.....	19
Youth lack knowledge as to how to get around using public Transportation (including school buses).....	26
EMPLOYMENT	31
Are teens knowledgeable about job opportunities in their community.....	31
Teens do not have/realize they have appropriate job skills.....	34
COMMUNITY INTERACTION	39
Youth perceive a lack of involvement/participation from the school system.....	39
Youth perceive a need to improve involvement in youth/adult partnerships to benefit the entire community.....	45
GRAPHICS	
Map #1, Proposed Teen Center Location.....	11
Illustration #1, Conceptual Plan for Teen Center.....	12
Map #2, Existing Teen Entertainment.....	14
Map #3, HRT Bus Route Map with Youth Gathering Places.....	21

YOUTH COMPONENT OF THE 2010 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Background

In 1996, two high schools seniors were hired as Youth Planners for the City of Hampton's Planning Department and given the job of creating a Youth Component to Hampton's Comprehensive Plan. They decided that the best way to go about creating a component for youth in the plan was to first get youth input. Through research such as focus groups and surveys of young people, and meetings with young people at their high school groups, youth groups at churches, and other extra-curricular activities, the Planners concluded that young people were most concerned with:

- Youth Space;
- Transportation;
- Employment; and
- Community Interaction.

Youth Space covers the places available for young peoples' use, as well as a "youth friendly" environment that young people can call their own. The issue of Transportation entails how young people get from place to place, access to transit and their views around its cost. Employment is the way in which young people are treated and viewed in the business community, as well as the skills and knowledge of opportunities that young people acquire. Community Interaction is described as young peoples' relationships with the people and places that affect them in Hampton. A city-wide survey that the Youth Planners conducted with teens further indicated that these four issues were of highest concern amongst young Hamptonians.

New Youth Planners were hired in 1997 and given the task of determining what young people envision should happen around each of the four key issues. At the same time, the City Council appointed a Youth Commission to provide a voice for youth in Hampton. This Commission, comprised of 20 high schools students from public and private schools, guides the work of the Youth Planners and provides the youth perspective that can be factored into the City's decisions. Armed with recommendations of possible solutions to the four issues from the Youth Commission and other Hampton teens, a steering committee was formed to help narrow the solutions in each category. Finally, staff determined that before focusing on the solutions recommended under the key issues, problems needed to be more clearly identified. The following lists are the problem statements under each issue, with the first in each list being the Youth Commission's initial priorities:

Youth Space –

- There is no place specifically set aside for teens.
- There is a lack of recreational opportunities.
- Existing community retail/entertainment are not “youth friendly”.
- There is not a wide variety of entertainment.

Transportation –

- Hampton is oriented for auto traffic, not pedestrian or alternative transportation, so youth are overly dependent on cars.
- There is a lack of knowledge as to how to get around using public transportation (Include school buses)
- There is a perception that bus stops are not safe.
- Public transportation (as an alternative to cars) is too expensive.

Employment -

- Youth are not knowledgeable about opportunities.
- Youth do not have/realize they have job skills.
- Youth are not always viewed positively by business.

Community Interaction –

- There is a lack of cooperation/participation from school system.
- There is still a need to improve youth/adult partnerships to benefit the entire community.
- There is a lack of involvement in neighborhood concerns.

YOUTH SPACE

Youth believe that there is no place specifically set aside for teens.

Research

Planners held numerous group meetings of young people throughout the city in order to gain their opinion on the issue of Youth Space. The response that teenagers want to find a place to “hang out and chill” was heard more than several times from young people when asked, “What do teens want?” When Youth Planners conducted “speak out” sessions and asked young people questions like, “What do you consider to be Youth Space?”, and “If there were a new place for youth in Hampton what would you want to happen there?”, responses were that they would like to have a place specifically for youth where young people are always welcome. Young people also responded that they would like to have a variety of activities in a place set aside for them. It should be noted that the young people questioned were in the age range of 13-19 for this particular questionnaire.

The Youth Planners also participated on a committee to assess the feasibility of building a Teen Center in the City of Hampton. This particular group expressed to Planners on several occasions that they wanted a facility, not only for music and dancing, but for a variety of activities geared toward youth. Activities identified included sports, other types of games, a “coffee house” type atmosphere, job training, computer and Internet availability, movies, and many more suggestions.

A 1998 Youth Space survey conducted by the Hampton Coalition for Youth also indicates that young people would like a facility to call their own. The survey asked 1,099 youth such questions as: “Where do you go? Would you go to different places if new ones were available? Where should those places be located?” A few key results from the survey are:

- Most teens spend their time at home, hanging around, or at a friends’ house. Other than sports, few are involved on a regular basis in positive extra- curricular activities.
- Most young people do not believe that there is a place in their neighborhood where they can go after school.
- Young people have definite opinions about the activities they would like to have in their space and ways to make that space “youth friendly”.
- The majority of young people would like a place for youth filled with a variety of activities. Older teens overwhelmingly prefer a centralized location, accessible to all youth. Teens stress the need for safety.

Goals & Objectives

The Youth Space Subcommittee's goal is to provide a "youth friendly", youth oriented space specifically tailored to the needs and desires of teens. A successful facility would meet the following objectives:

- Young people feel that interaction with other youth in a positive environment is a necessity. Teenagers think that it is very important to get to know their peers. Young people will interact with each other no matter what; however, some young people feel that a space specifically for youth will offer the perfect opportunity for teens to come together and associate in a positive environment. A place for teens should offer positive activities promoted for and by young people. Teenagers would ultimately have their own place to hang out together without being criticized for it.
- Youth want to have independence without adult dictation. Young people feel that they are capable of making good decisions without adult input. This feeling does not apply to all decisions that are to be made; however, teens want to be independent in what goes on in a place set aside for them. Young people do not want to be constantly watched and criticized by adults, but want to be themselves. The youth want to have the opportunity to bring ideas for their space to adults on their own terms.
- Ensuring diversity with regard to participants and activities is a key factor in the success of a specific space for young people. In order to achieve diversity, activities and participation in the youth space must be directed toward people of all racial, ethnic, disability, religious, and socio-economic status.
- Easy access to the youth space for all young people in the community is key to its success. All teenagers in the city should be able to come to a common place in a manner that is not only convenient for them, but their parents also. The space should be open and welcoming to all.
- Young people feel that a "youth friendly" environment should be provided for the youth space. A "youth friendly" person enjoys listening to and working with young people in any environment. A young person should feel comfortable with the adult in the facility or space. "Youth friendly" people should be able to respect a young person's views and opinions on a subject, whether they agree with the teenager or not. Adults in youth spaces should possess these skills in order to be successful.
- Allowing youth to have a strong sense of membership/ownership is important. Young people should feel that they are always welcome in the youth space. They should know that they have access to all materials in the space. Youth should gain a feeling of belonging when they go to the facility. The atmosphere should be a warm, open and caring one. Young people should know that their opinions will be heard and taken seriously. If a young person feels that a change should be made they should be able to openly say so. The young person's idea should be heard and taken into consideration.

The Subcommittee predicts that there will be several community and individual benefits if these objectives can be met:

- An increase in the number of well-rounded teens and young adults who have benefited from positive peer exposure and interaction;
- An increase in the number of responsible teens and young adults due to their exposure to leadership and decision-making opportunities; and
- A decrease in complaints about teens “hanging out” elsewhere in Hampton.

Recommendations

Due to the results from all of the research that has been conducted, the Youth Space Subcommittee recommends a Teen Center as one solution to the problem that youth believe that there is no place specifically set aside for teens.

- **Hampton should have a separate teen facility as opposed to another community facility.**

It is necessary to have a facility dedicated to and catering only to teens because of the vast differences between teens and the older and younger generations. Young people feel that the center should be open to people between the ages of 13 to 19, hence the name Teen Center. This restriction will allow teenagers to interact with the people they feel most comfortable around. Young people have expressed through surveys, focus groups, and forums that they need a place to call their own. Teenagers do not like going to places where younger children dominate the facility, which is true for the community centers in Hampton. Teens are at a point in their lives where they want only to be around people in their age range. They feel that they have little in common with the younger children and prefer not to associate themselves with them on a regular basis. Because so many younger children do use the community centers it is necessary to have strict adult supervision. Teens are not very comfortable in situations where there is an adult keeping a close eye on their every move. Young people are also somewhat uneasy about the vibe that they feel when they go to some community facilities with a majority of adults. Some older people are not very receptive to a large number of teens hanging around together in groups. When young people witness adults acting like they do not want teens around, this makes teens uncomfortable. If teenagers feel that they are not welcome in some environments, or certain environments do not meet their desires, teens will not go to these places. Due to these factors, few teens frequent Hampton’s community centers.

This particular recommendation ties in with the objective “young people feel that interaction with other youth in a positive environment is a necessity.” A separate Teen Center allows teenagers to interact with their peers in the type of setting that is

most comfortable and flexible to their needs. A Teen Center would be able to meet all the standards set under this objective.

- **The Teen Center should be located in the Coliseum Central area.**

A location for the Teen Center should have several characteristics:

- Easy access for all teens in the city;
- A diverse amount of surroundings;
- A safe environment; and
- Attractiveness.

Research was conducted as to where the most accessible place for a Teen Center for residents in Hampton would be. The Coliseum Central area was picked as the best location for the Teen Center. Results from a survey of 1,099 Hampton teens also shows that young people would rather have one facility for themselves in a central location. The Coliseum Central area is on all city bus routes. A particular high school is not located in the area. If the center were planned in the neighborhood of one particular school, ownership issues come into question. This is not a problem with the Coliseum Central area. The area is well lit and patrolled fairly heavily by the police. Youth can also contribute to the local economy by spending money in the Coliseum Central area when they visit the Teen Center.

Locating a Teen Center in the Coliseum Central area of Hampton addresses the Youth Space objective “easy access to the youth space for all young people in the community.” The area is convenient and welcoming to all teenagers. Teenagers spend a lot of time in the Coliseum area of the city so it is most logical to place a Teen Center where they already like to spend their time.

- **Staff should be “youth friendly”.**

Teens feel that the staff of the Teen Center should be college age or young adults. Teens feel that these people can relate to them more than a much older person. Although college age to young adult is a good age for day to day staff, young people feel that the administrative staff should be older. Teens say this because an older person in an administrative position may have more experience in that field than a younger person. The older person should still be a “youth friendly” person.

Young people feel that a “youth friendly” environment should be provided for the particular space is an objective that is achieved by the age recommendation. Young people want to work with adults who enjoy working with them. Teens feel that they can better relate to people closer to their own age. As long as respect in the Teen Center is a part of its day-to-day agenda the center will be successful.

- **Programming of the Teen Center should be youth-driven and versatile.**

Teens say that the Teen Center should encompass a mixture of activities and services. The center should try to meet the needs of all teens in Hampton. There should be a mixture of active activities, like sports and dancing and more quiet activities, like clinics and computers. These activities should be separated from one another in some way, whether it be the time they take place or in the design of the facility. Some activities will require a bit of privacy, like the clinic, while others, like the dances, will be open to all.

The Teen Center should be open for changes to be made to it in the future. As today's teens get older and move on a new set of teens will take their place. What is "in" with one group of teens may be "out" with the next. The Teen Center should keep the changing ideas in mind and be receptive to new programming. If this does not happen, the Teen Center will be unsuccessful. The center has to be enjoyable to those who utilize it at the time. What was fun to teenagers ten years ago is not what teens today are into. If the Teen Center is designed for flexibility, it will always be "the place to be."

The programming and versatility aspects of the Teen Center coincide with the objective of "ensuring diversity in regards to participants and activities." All teens should be able to come away from the Teen Center with some of their needs and wants addressed. The activities at the center should be ever changing so that young people are always interested in going to the Teen Center for something new.

"Allowing youth to have a strong sense of membership/ownership" is also an objective that is met under this recommendation. Young peoples' input into the programming of the facility will make the Teen Center a place where teens go because it entails what they want. The implementation of new programming should always be talked over with teenagers. Teens opinions should be taken into great consideration in order to make the Teen Center a place where all young people want to go.

- **Teens should have decision-making positions in the Teen Center.**

Young people feel that the Teen Center has to have a Board of Directors or some sort of authority board. In order to ensure the continued success of the Teen Center an equal amount of teens as well as adults must sit on this board. Teenagers know what their peers enjoy and do not enjoy so they would add a significant amount of wisdom to this board. Without a majority of teen input into the happenings of the Teen Center, the center is more likely to be unsuccessful. Youth input in the planning of city facilities has been somewhat neglected up to this point in time and putting young people on the Teen Center's Board of Directors gives Hampton the opportunity to appreciate youth now.

The Teen Center is for teenagers. The Youth Space objective "allowing youth to have a strong sense of membership/ownership" agrees with the recommendation of a board with young people as an integral part of the team. Young people feel that

their input is just as important, if not more important, than the adult's input. Young people on the Board will ensure the prospering of the Teen Center.

- **Teens should have input into the hours of operation.**

Young people feel that the Teen Center should be closed a little before city curfew during the week. The Teen Center's hours should be after school until 9:30 p.m. The hours should be more lenient on weekends and during the summer. The overall hours should be decided by the Board.

Operation hours of the Teen Center address the objective of "allowing youth to have a strong sense of membership/ownership." Teens want to feel that they are always welcome in the Teen Center. The input of teens on setting the hours allows them to be an integral part in the decision making of the Center. The objective that states "youth want to have independence without adult dictation" can be tied into the hours of operation. Having a say in the operational hours of their facility gives teens an opportunity to bring their opinions and ideas to the project.

- **Non-Hampton teens should be allowed reasonable access to the Hampton Teen Center.**

Results of discussions with youth of Hampton show that they feel that the Hampton Teen Center should be welcoming of teens that do not live in the city. Teenagers enjoy meeting new peers on all occasions. If the Teen Center were to be open to Hampton residents only, teens would get bored with it. One purpose of teens going out and associating with each other is to meet new people. The Teen Center should be inclusive and open to all teens, but it is recommended that the Teen Center Board have the right to control who goes in and out of the Center. Safety of Teen Center participants is an overriding priority in the minds of Hampton teens. Teenagers do not want their safety to be jeopardized by letting teens from other areas into the center. As long as the issue of safety is addressed, Hampton teens see no problem with having teens from other cities come into their Teen Center; in fact they welcome fresh faces.

Allowing non-Hampton teens in the Teen Center meets two of the Youth Space objectives. "Young people feel that interaction with other youth in a positive environment is a necessity" is once again addressed. The positive activities in the Teen Center will attract young people from other areas. Teenagers in Hampton want to be able to interact with new people without being criticized for their actions. The objective of "ensuring diversity in regards to participants and activities" is also touched upon by this recommendation. Opening activities to all teens allows this objective to be met.

- **The Teen Center should provide a safe, secure environment.**

There should definitely be some type of security in the Teen Center. Young people feel that their safety is most important above all else. Uniformed security may create a feeling of discomfort in the Teen Center; some teens may feel intimidated. Although teens do not want uniforms to be a practice, they do believe that security personnel should be identifiable. Teens say that badges may be the best solution to recognizing security.

This recommendation also works with the objective that “young people feel that interaction with other young people in a positive environment is a necessity.” In order to make a place where teenagers can interact positively the safety of the facility should be taken into consideration. Security at the Teen Center can provide the desired safe feeling of the environment.

- **The facility should offer job opportunities to teens.**

Teens see the Teen Center as an opportunity to gain work experience. The center should create paid positions that are open to young people. Jobs in the Teen Center would allow for work experience in a positive and healthy environment around peers. The Teen Center can create positions that can act as a stepping stone to bigger and better job opportunities.

“Ensuring diversity in regards to participants and activities” is the objective that can be met by the recommendation of having job opportunities for young people in the facility. In order to continually attract the teens to the Teen Center they need incentives. A job opportunity is a great benefit to the youth. Job opportunities within the facility are an additional enticement for teens to come out and enjoy the Teen Center.

- **Partnerships with existing youth-serving organizations should be explored.**

Teenagers feel that it is a benefit to them and to a Teen Center to work with youth-serving organizations. They say that organizations such as the Parks and Recreation Department and the School System within the city, as well as non-for-profit organizations like Alternatives, will help the Teen Center to prosper. Young people feel that there is an advantage to working with organizations that have a history of working with teenagers. Most adults that work for these types of organizations know how to relate to teens' needs. They are “youth friendly” adults who understand that teens have strong and valuable opinions. These adults are used to interacting with young people and have a good sense of how to get along with teens, but still have some authority. Young people enjoy working with adults that do not treat them like children, but as equals. Teens gain respect for adults who appreciate what they have to say and take them seriously. Partnering up with existing youth-serving organizations will make teenagers feel comfortable in a Teen Center atmosphere. Most adults that work for youth-serving organizations will be able to come into the Teen Center and work in harmony with the teens because they already know how to relate to them. Forming a partnership with these entities

from the beginning of the project will build a strong relationship between teenagers and these “youth friendly” adults.

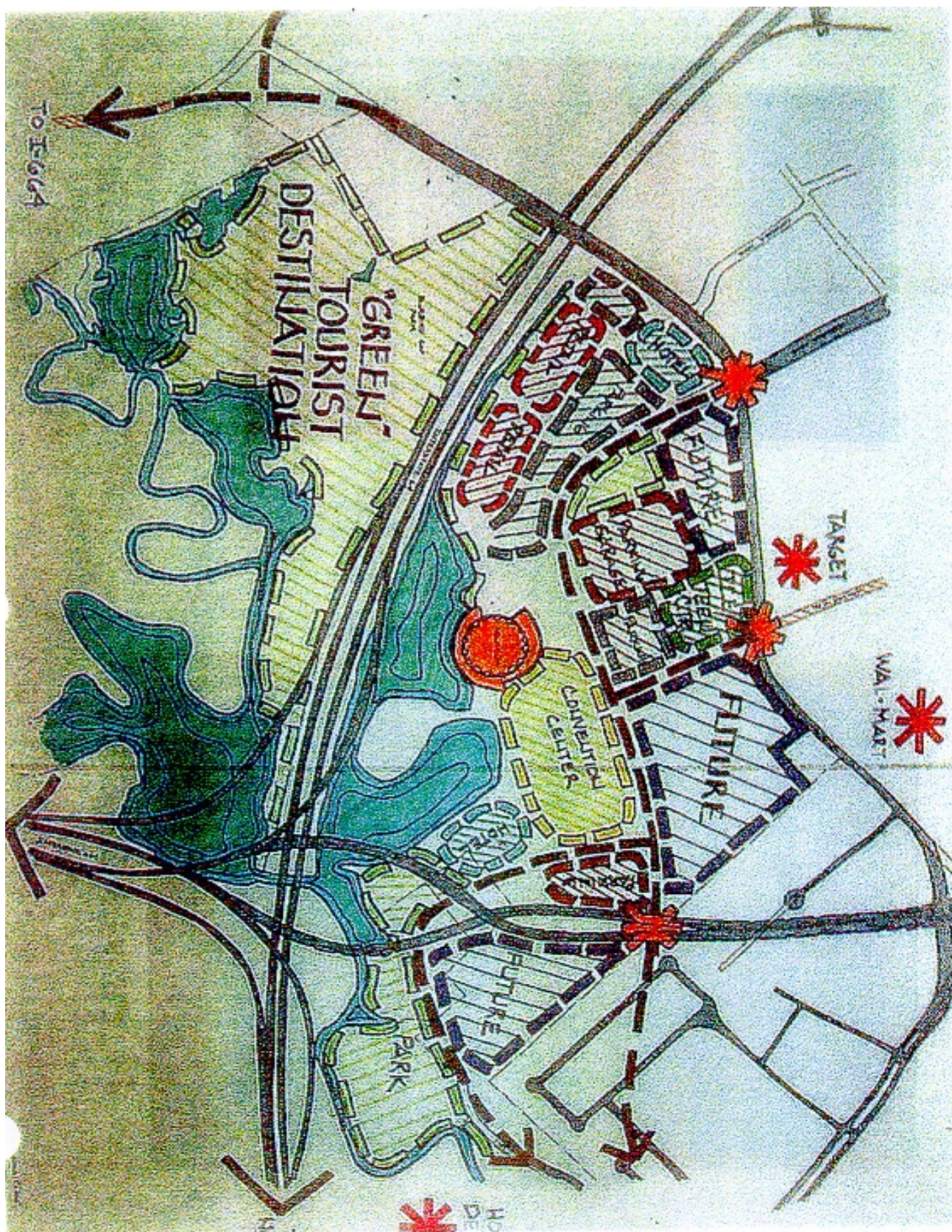
Partnering with the youth serving organizations reaches the objective that “young people feel that a “youth friendly” environment should be provided for their particular space.” Having adults that have the skills to be “youth friendly” working in the Teen Center would help to ensure the success of the project. Teenagers would feel comfortable with this type of arrangement.

Implementation

One way to implement the recommendations stated above has been preliminarily pursued by the Planning Department in their development of a conceptual plan for the Crossroads Project. The Crossroads Project is a plan for the redevelopment of the Pine Chapel property, near the Hampton Coliseum.

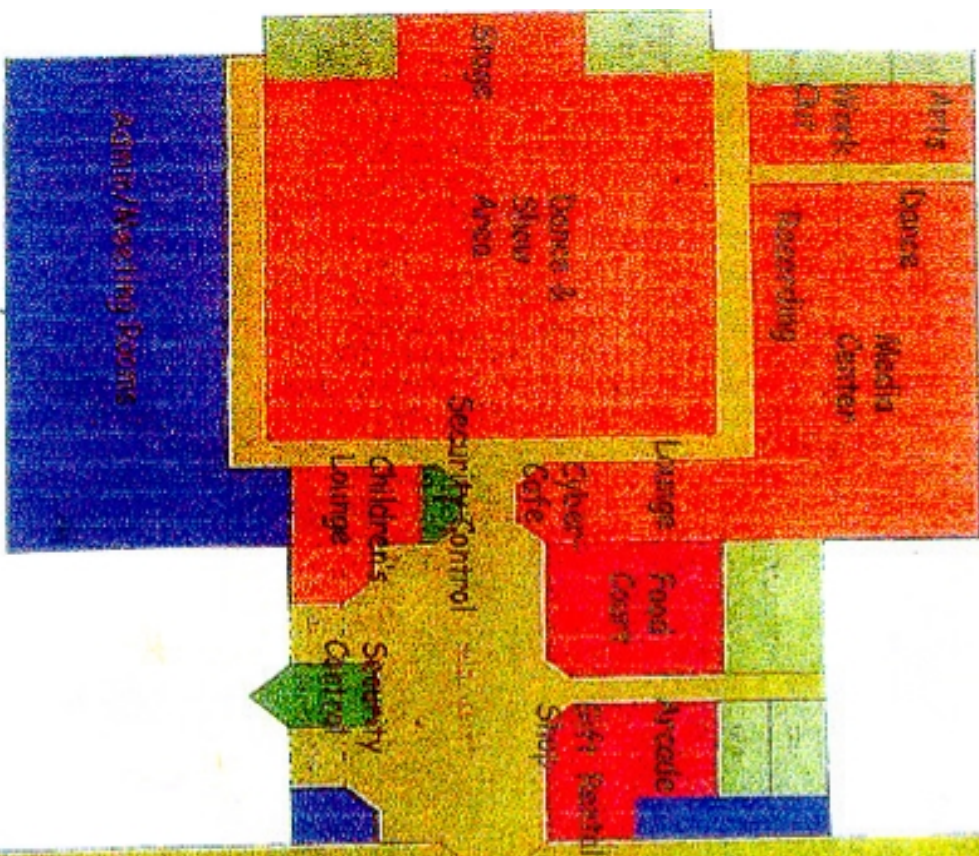
The Youth Space Subcommittee of the Youth Commission has been working in collaboration with Parks and Recreation, Alternatives, Inc., and United States Ice Sports on a design for a facility, combining a Teen Center and an Ice Skating Facility. The two uses would be co-located in one facility with a common area in the middle. The Teen Center would be run by Parks and Recreation and Alternatives. The Ice Skating Facility would be run by United States Ice Sports. The common area would be run by all three partners. Young people have identified several advantages to this particular partnership. In focus groups young people said that they would definitely use an Ice Skating Facility if it were available to them. Teens are most excited by the entire concept. Not only will the teenagers bring their business to the Ice Skating Facility, but the Ice Skating Facility could bring business to the Teen Center. Teens that come from other cities to use the Ice Skating Facility would be welcome to use the Teen Center, thus creating revenue for both facilities, not to mention bringing new faces to the Teen Center. Young people also support combining the Teen Center with this ice facility because there could be more job opportunities for teens. The Ice Skating Facility could hire teens for several jobs in their part of the facility.

Young people have expressed over and over that Coliseum Central is the best area to build the Teen Center. Map #1 shows a proposed location for the Teen Center/Ice Skating Facility, on the south side of Pine Chapel Road, where it meets Saville Road. Illustration #1 is a conceptual plan for the joint facility.



Map #1

TEEN CENTER



ICE SKATING FACILITY

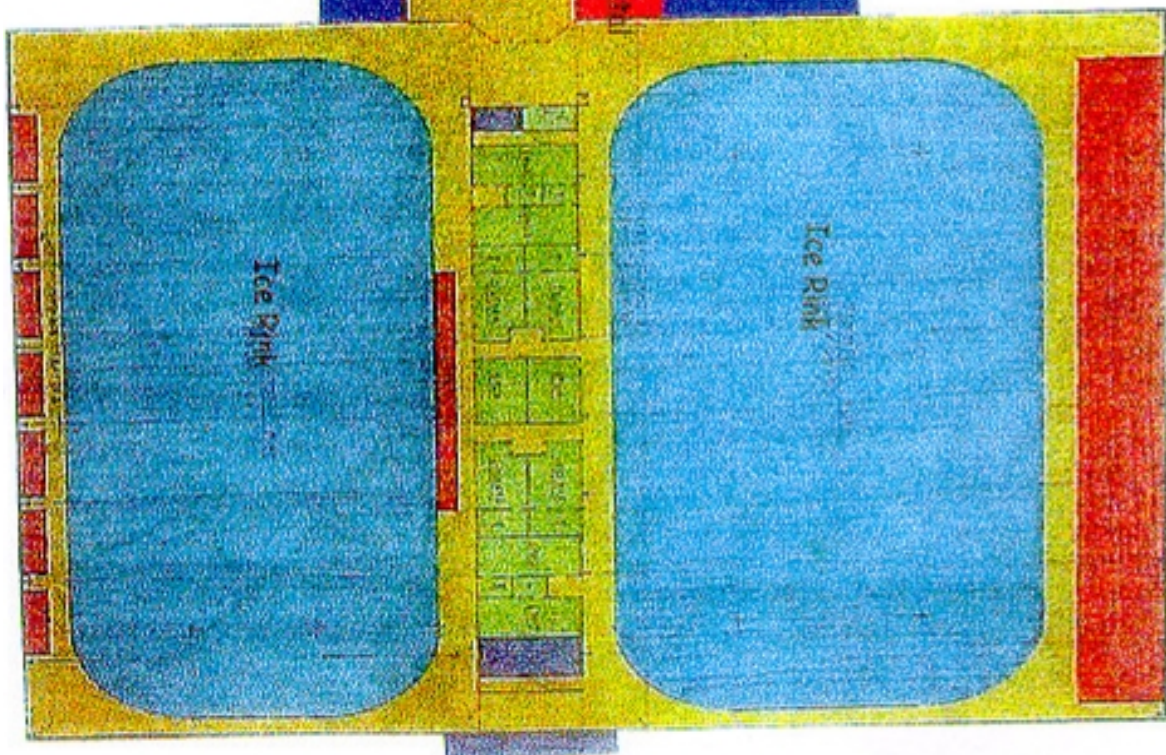


Illustration #1

Youth tell us there is not a wide variety of entertainment.

Research

The Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee had the task of defining exactly what “a wide variety of entertainment” means. First, Youth Planners reviewed the results of a survey conducted by the Hampton Coalition for Youth in 1998. For the past few years young people have consistently stated that “there is nothing to do,” and the survey shows that if young people were given new things to do they would utilize these activities. Youth Planners asked young people in various summer activities such as band camps, summer school, athletic activities, and community programs, if they felt the statement was still true, and they agreed. We also held a youth forum at the Coliseum Mall. Most of the elementary school aged children at the forum were very happy with their present options of entertainment; however, the Youth Planners realized that the teenagers were not happy and their feelings of having “nothing to do” has a different meaning than what the public may think.

Most young people do not talk about “entertainment” – they talk about “things to do” and “places to go.” When teenagers say there is nothing to do, they really mean there is nothing interesting to do. Of course there are things to do, but teenagers today want other choices or something new. When asked “if you could add one thing to the entertainment available to the teens in Hampton, what would it be,” the responses varied from a teen nightclub and a laser tag to a simple place to hangout without being “labeled” or considered loitering. A list of all the responses was compiled and then the Youth Planners set out to see exactly what entertainment is available to youth in Hampton. Site checks were done, and Map #2 shows all the existing teen entertainment. In fact, of all the things on the list, only 5 are not within our boundaries.

Type of Entertainment	Locations in Hampton	Locations on the Peninsula
Movie theaters	4	Yes
Bowling alleys	4	Yes
Coffee shops	2	Yes
Pool halls	3	Yes
Skating rinks	2	Yes
Pools with membership	8	Yes
Pools without membership	2	Yes
Indoor basketball courts	19	Yes
Outdoor basketball courts	27	Yes
Teen friendly restaurants	9	Yes
Teen hangout	0	No
Teen center	0	No
Ultra-zone laser tag	0	No
Ice-skating facility	0	Yes
Rope course	0	Yes
Teen Club	1	Yes

[illegible]

York County

MSA

Langley AFB

Newport News

Newport News

Hampton Roads

Chesapeake Bay

LEAD

Two Ditt

10/10/10

Dissolving

Coffee Shop

0441

Panel 11.11

100

2. **Amplitude**

the first 25 days of the study.

2

1

[illegible]

Map #2

The five things that are not in Hampton are a teen hangout, a teen center, an ultra-zone laser tag, an ice-skating facility, and a ropes course. Three of these five, with the exception of the teen hangout and a teen center, can be found in our neighboring cities, of York County, Virginia Beach, Newport News, and Norfolk.

When asked to define a “teen hangout”, some youth stated that they want a place to go where they could be with their peers and not be considered loitering; others just wanted a place to go and make plans for the entertainment of their choice. The existing teen club does address part of the “teen hangout” problem, but not all of it. A teen club is a place where young people pay to be with their peers without getting in trouble or breaking the laws. However, paying to go somewhere to make plans or just to meet up doesn’t always make sense. Teens still want somewhere to go where the environment will allow them to be with each other without necessarily doing a programmed activity. The previous Youth Space section outlines the recommendations of a teen center, and that will meet some of the youth’s needs. But the teen center alone will not solve the entertainment problem.

So why do teens say there isn’t a wide variety of things to do? We have found that young people may not know of some of the entertainment because of a lack of targeted advertising. Much of the youth advertising is by word of mouth. We also realize that cost is very important in choosing something to do. Young people cannot afford or are not willing to pay for entertainment that is priced beyond their means. Activities for youth should be affordable. Young people also told us that they like for their community service or their academic success to be acknowledged and rewarded by discounts at the places that they choose for entertainment.

The problem isn’t always what is available or affordable to teenagers, but who uses the venues. Teenagers want to be around other teens. Through all the research there were continuous comments about the youth-friendliness of the entertainment places that they do know about. Young people will not go where they feel they are treated or viewed in a negative way.

Teens are bored with what they have and they need a place to be themselves. The Youth Commission and the Youth Planners realized through the research that teenager trends are not always the same. As they grow older they lose interest in certain things and want new things to do. Entertainment that is suitable to one generation of teenagers may not be what the next generation wants, but there is a need for a variety of things to do to please all the youth in Hampton.

Goals & Benefits

The Subcommittee’s goals are to increase awareness of positive entertainment venues, increase interest in the already existing venues, and to expand the choice of entertainment available for youth. If these goals were met the following benefits could be experienced:

- There would be fewer complaints about having nothing to do because young people would be more aware of the entertainment that is available to teens in the City.

- Young people could become more interested in the things that they are already aware of if they were specifically marketed to. Businesses and youth could develop relationships. Youth are not always viewed positively by the public, especially by some entertainment businesses. Youth are stereotyped or labeled at times and because of this they are not always treated in a positive business-like way. Some youth also have prejudgments about some of the adults that work in businesses, partly because of some past experience that young people may have had. Both youth and adults can benefit from being around each other in a friendly, business-like atmosphere, especially in an entertainment business, to overcome the general misperceptions that they may have of each other.
- There could be a decrease in the amount of negative youth activity. When young people have time on their hands some of them tend to make use of it by getting involved with drugs, alcohol, and other illegal activities. A great number of teen pregnancies are conceived after school or in the summer when teens say they have nothing to do. When youth were asked, “why do you smoke?” a large number of the responses were there is nothing else to do. Research shows that that there are things to do, and by increasing awareness of those entertainment venues, the likelihood of youth being involved with the negative things may decrease.
- Opportunities for positive activities could also help meet the City’s goal to build healthy families and develop opportunities for young people to succeed. With more to do and less time to be involved in negative activities, Hampton will give our youth more of the *40 Developmental Assets*, such as creative activity, other adult relationships, cultural competence, and responsibility.
- We could address the age-old comment that “there is nothing to do.” Youth might watch less television after school and get out of the house more. We could give them more opportunities for interactions in society and teach them lessons. Children that are active and involved get opportunities that make significant impacts on their futures.

Recommendations

The Subcommittee feels that youth in Hampton would be more aware of the entertainment available to them, and be more likely to become more interested with what is available if the following recommendations were met:

- **When businesses present themselves, the City should encourage teen-oriented uses as much as possible to expand opportunities for youth.**

Business growth is good for the City and encouraging more teen entertainment brings in new revenue and provides new opportunities for youth.

- **The Youth Commission and businesses should partner to come up with opportunities to give young people more entertainment choices and maintain interest in existing venues.**

Youth want flexibility and different choices of entertainment. The proposed teen center could be used to provide flexible entertainment. For example one weekend could be an R&B dance and the next would be heavy metal. The Youth Commission could also start a program where different business could set one night of each month to be a “teen night”. Continuous flexibility and new events will regain and maintain youth interest.

- **Teen-oriented businesses should support youth community service achievements and academic success.**

Showing support for good academics and community service would be a benefit and a reward to those young people who volunteer their services in the City. Recognition for academic achievement and community service could increase youth community involvement. Young people that volunteer services to their community could be given discounts, for example, for so many hours of service. In the past A+ cards were a success. Not only did they promote good academics, but they also created a partnership between the businesses, schools, and youth that made certain youth venues more affordable to the students that met the academic requirement.

- **The Youth Commission should create opportunities for businesses to discuss “youth friendliness” and how the goals of both the Youth Commission and the businesses could be met.**

Establishing relationships between youth and businesses helps each to overcome prejudgments and learn to accommodate each other’s needs. Discussions would allow the businesses and the young people to come up with ways to help youth act responsibly so that the business can remain open, and create youth-friendly environments. Specifically, youth-friendly environments have the following qualities:

- The entertainment should be fresh and flexible to accommodate the needs of the youth now and in the future. This allows businesses to continuously keep the youth interest.
- Businesses should be affordable to young people. Businesses should take into consideration that a lot of young people do not work, and a lot of parents will not give large amounts of money to go out. Young people should be rewarded for their community service or academic success.
- Entertainment needs to be on the Peninsula to allow a greater number of teen access to the entertainment of their choice. A lot of youth do not drive, and lots of those that do drive are not willing or are not allowed by their parents to go

outside the Peninsula. Most parents feel safer knowing their child is closer to home.

- Entertainment should attract a large number of teenagers. Youth want to be around their peers. If the business attracts too many younger children or too many adults the teens will lose interest in that choice of entertainment. This may also occur if the younger children or adults have negative perceptions of the teenagers and complain.
- Activities should be marketed to youth. When youth are specifically marketed to they know that a lot of other youth will be at that place, therefore that business becomes their choice of entertainment. A lot of youth will pay to go somewhere and then not participate in the entertainment. They are happy just being in a positive environment where they can interact with each other and not be considered loitering, or labeled. One way may be to get The Daily Press to provide a youth section on a regular basis.

TRANSPORTATION

Hampton is oriented for auto traffic, not pedestrian or alternative transportation, so youth are overly dependent on cars.

Research

Before we could set out to develop recommended solutions to the problem, we needed to be sure we understood the problem. We used four separate sources to help use clarify the how dependent teens really are on cars and identify possible solutions. Field checks to see how teens can get to places where they like to hang out, a survey of high school students, a public forum for teens, and discussions with HRT, the local bus company.

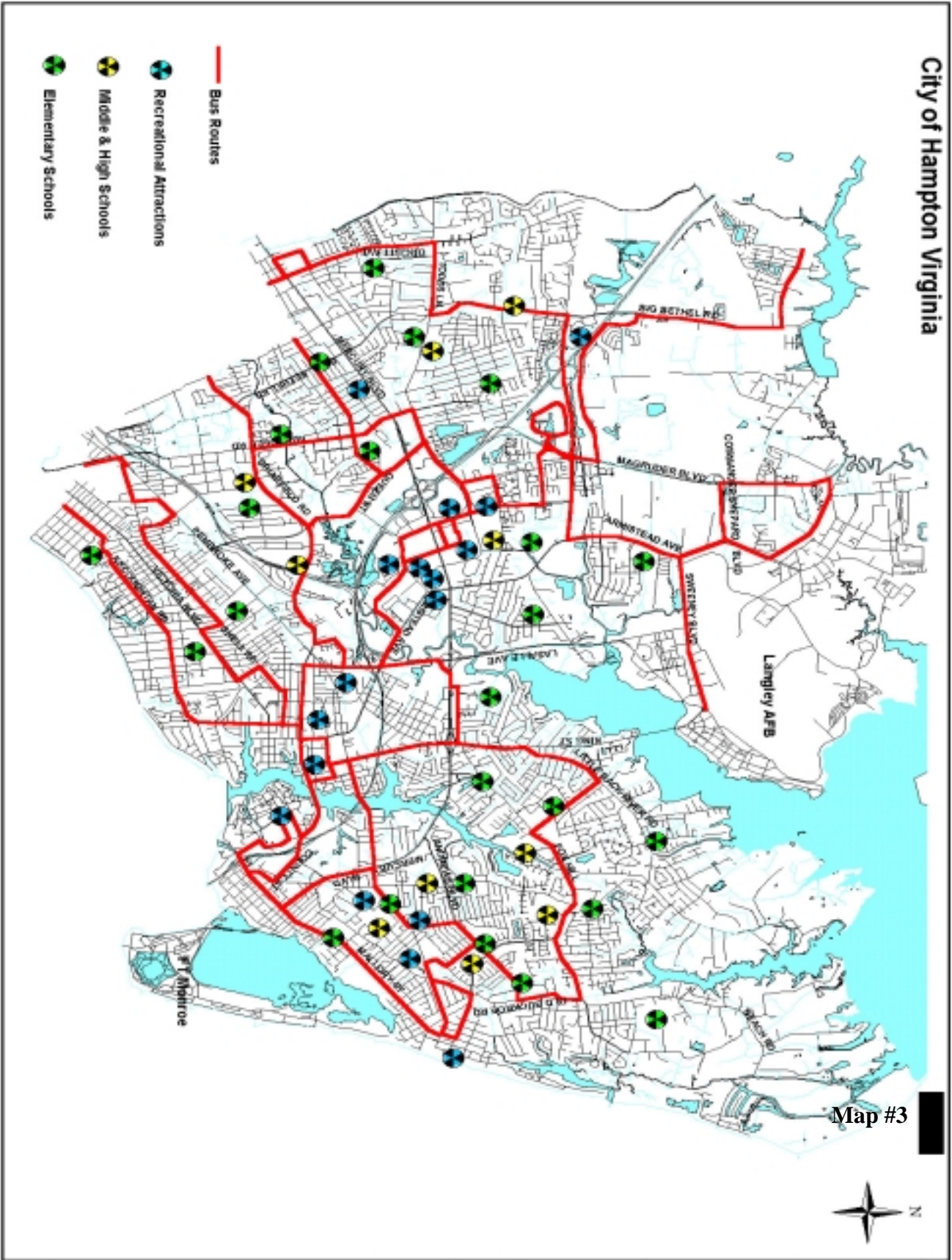
We needed to verify that teens are overly dependent on cars, so we checked to see if the places where they want to go have other options. A number of places have been identified as places that teens would go to hang out or chill – gathering places. These are shown on Map#3, along with the HRT bus routes in Hampton:

- Coliseum Mall
- Hampton Town Center/AMC 24 Theater
- Coliseum Crossing Shopping Center
- Regal 12 Theater
- Buckroe Beach
- All public schools -- 4 high schools, 5 middle schools and 24 elementary schools
- Northampton, North Phoebus and Old Hampton Community Centers
- Downtown Hampton
- YMCA
- Hampton University
- Hampton Coliseum
- Pool halls, skating rinks and bowling alleys
- Wal-Mart

In addition the HRT service, we field-checked each site to see if they are supported by different transportation options. The results of our site visits are shown in the following table (an “X” means the option is available):

Gathering Places	Bus		Bus		Side		Cross		Bike		Bike
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	Service	Stops	Walks	Walks	Paths	Racks
Buckroe Beach	X	X	X	X	X	
Century Lanes Bowling Alley	X	X	X			



The survey was our attempt to ask a wide variety of students how they get around in Hampton. We surveyed over 200 students in all four public high schools, with the following results:

- Most teens don't own their own cars, and many do not know how to use the city bus service.
- Most teens either drive or catch a ride with others when they go to hang out.
- About half the teens think the bus fare is too high, and half think it is about right.
- If they use alternative transportation, they most often bike to where they want to go.
- Even though many neighborhoods do not have sidewalks, less than half of the teens living in neighborhoods without sidewalks see this as a problem.

These results confirmed much of the information gained by the previous survey conducted by the Coalition for Youth. That survey found that young teens depend upon their parents for transportation; as teens get older they tend to rely on friends with cars. Females are more likely to take public transportation, while males tend to ride their bikes.

We took the results of our field checks and survey to a teen forum where we asked two basic questions: How do teens get around in Hampton? What would improve the bus system? The comments reinforced much of the information we had already received. Many teens see the city bus service as inconvenient and expensive. Some areas of the city don't have any bus service – these were referred to as “bus challenged.” Other teens brought up concerns about the lack of bike paths and laws against riding bikes on sidewalks. They do not feel safe riding in the street, and are not allowed to ride on the sidewalks – what are they to do? Teens questioned the School Board policy requiring students living within 1-1/2 miles of school to walk – no bus transportation is provided to these students. This is not a problem so long as there are sidewalks, but many neighborhood streets and major roads do not have sidewalks. Teens talked about dodging cars and ditches twice a day on their way to and from school, and raised concerns about their younger brothers' and sisters' welfare.

Finally, we realized that more specific information about HRT and its services was necessary if we were going to make informed recommendations to address these concerns. We met with representatives of HRT's marketing and planning divisions to present the concerns raised through our research. Although many of the teens did not feel that HRT wanted them as customers and riders, the HRT staff expressed their desire to broaden their customers to include teens -- they are planning advertising specifically targeting teens. HRT staff echoed teens' concerns about the lack of service in some areas, and the time between bus trips. They are working to expand service areas and want to cut time between trips from 1 hour to ½ hour. HRT staff also explained their service is funded by local governments, and that the current fares pay for about 40% of their operating costs.

The Subcommittee also researched alternative transportation efforts in other cities. In Portland, Oregon, a group called “UCAN” started a program called the “Free

Community Bike Program”. The city has taken old, used and confiscated bikes and made them available for use in the city. This service is free of charge and has had great results. This non-profit organization works on environmental and livability issues which affect the City of Portland. It was started in September 1997. UCAN came up with a way to make the bikes look “distinguishable” by painting them yellow. UCAN fixed the bikes up and then put them around the city for use. It has been said that the program keeps down auto traffic and pollution problems. These results may be able to be duplicated in Hampton, particularly in those areas where we are trying to encourage more pedestrian traffic. Phoebus, Buckroe and Downtown are areas that might benefit from this type of approach. Street level activity is more appealing with less automobile exhaust and with the greater accessibility gained by bike use.

Goals and Objectives

The Transportation Subcommittee set two goals for their recommendations:

- Youth will have more transportation choices and options;
- Youth will be more inclined to use other means of transportation – walking, bikes, buses and carpools.

The Subcommittee predicts citywide and private benefits if these goals can be met:

- There would be a decrease in auto traffic.
- There would be a decrease in air pollution from automobile exhaust.
- There would be an increase in youth accessibility to all areas of the city.
- There could be an increase in business revenues if youth who previously could not access businesses can do so now.

We should be able to measure our success in reaching these goals and objectives. We expect to see:

- An increase of bike use;
- An increase in bus riders;
- An increase in pedestrian activity; and
- An increase in visitor counts at attractions and teen destination points.

Recommendations

After reviewing our research, the Transportation Subcommittee recommends the following to address the problem that Hampton is oriented for auto traffic, not pedestrian or alternative transportation, so youth are overly dependent on cars. These recommendations address concerns about bike use, bus service and pedestrian traffic.

Bike use: If Hampton is serious about exploring transportation alternatives, we have to begin to think differently about bicycles. Not only do we not encourage bike traffic, we do a lot to make it difficult, if not impossible.

- **The City should include youth participation on the Bikeways Commission that will review and plan the bikeways system in Hampton.**

- **Until an official bikeways system is established, the City's public safety officials should consider changing the law prohibiting bikes on sidewalks.**
- **The City should explore the UCAN Yellow Bike Program with the Downtown Hampton Partnership, the Phoebus Improvement League, and the Buckroe community.**
- **All schools and community centers should have bike racks for those individuals who choose to ride their bikes.**

Bus Service: If HRT and the City are interested in increasing riders on the bus system, they need to make the system more accessible and more "youth friendly". HRT should develop partnerships with their customers, especially youth.

- **HRT should include youth participation on their Advisory Committee.**
- **HRT should review their routes to expand service to all middle and high schools.**
- **HRT should follow through with their plans to advertise specifically to youth; youth should be included in the design of the campaign.**
- **Route maps and schedules should be prominently placed in all middle and high schools. An orientation for city busses should be incorporated into the program for school busses in the middle schools.**
- **A program of monthly and annual passes or incentives (at youth fares) should be investigated, as well as summer passes.**
- **The City should insure that all existing and proposed bus stops are well lit and have sufficient pavement to protect riders while they wait. All stops should be well marked – possibly with brighter signs so that they are readily visible to riders and drivers.**

Pedestrian traffic: Many teens would and do walk when possible, but the lack of sidewalks and protected crosswalks gets in the way.

- **All schools and community centers should have crosswalks for around the facilities.**
- **The School Board should revisit their 1 ½ mile walk policy in light of the lack of sidewalks – if there are not sidewalks along at least one side of the main streets (collectors and arterials) within that radius, the policy should be revised.**

- **The City should focus on the 1 ½ mile radius around schools when prioritizing the installation of new sidewalks. There should be sidewalks on at least one side of the main streets in that radius.**

Youth lack knowledge as to how to get around using public transportation (including school buses).

City Buses

Research

Many youth growing up in this community have grown up depending on the automobile to travel from one place to another, and have limited exposure to the bus system. This makes them unaware of public bus routes, and how buses operate. Hampton City Schools use the city buses for transporting young people to and from school, but these are not the normal bus routes, leaving some youth with the illusion that they know how to use the city bus.

The Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee came to the above conclusion after utilizing various methods of research. The first method used was a survey that was conducted at all four public high schools and two private schools (Hampton Christian and Peninsula Catholic). Our survey found that many youth understand how the school bus system operates but felt that if they missed the school bus they would not know how to get to school using the city bus. Few of the youth we surveyed used the bus for transportation to non-school related activities. Many youth felt that they would not know how to get to their favorite hangouts using the city bus. The majority of the young people surveyed admit to not knowing how to use the public bus system and many of them do not want to learn, due to perceptions of the types of individuals they may encounter on the bus.

HRT (Hampton Roads Transit) is Hampton's public bus system. It was formed when TRT (Tidewater Regional Transit) and HRT (Peninsula Transit Authority) merged. A review of HRT token, tickets and passes log revealed that youth make up only 6% of the total riders. Youth Planners interviewed HRT representatives who told staff that they know a problem exists with the amount of youth riders and that they plan to begin an advertising campaign that will target youth. HRT has been authorized to begin a citizens advisory committee that will include youth members. HRT is also looking forward to creating a youth advisory board, as previously recommended in this Youth Component.

Many of the youth who attended our youth forum, as well as those we surveyed, felt comfortable with the school bus system, but are uncomfortable with the thought of riding the city bus. Many young people are concerned about the types of people and attitudes they may encounter when riding the bus. When the majority of youth think of the bus, they think of being surrounded by senior citizens and or boisterous individuals. "Youth generally feel more comfortable around other youth" as stated earlier in the Youth Space section of this plan. If young people begin to see an increase of young people on the bus, more young people may choose to ride the bus.

The youth forum, held at the Coliseum Mall, also revealed that none of the attendees who had ever taken the bus anywhere other than school. The majority of the youth who attended the forum, like those who we surveyed, have expressed to us their fears of the

bus. Our focus, however, is not on the perception of the city buses, it is whether youth are knowledgeable of the current bus system.

Youth Planners found that Oregon's Multnomah County Commission set aside \$100,000 for a pilot program that will give transit passes to 2,000 low income students, thanks to a group known as SPIRIT (Sisters in Portland Impacting Real Issues Together). This program is similar to Newport News's Rec-Ride program. The Newport News Parks and Recreation Department sets up sites in early July that register young people ages 16 and under for the program. Each young person receives a pass with his or her picture on it. This pass allows that youth to travel anywhere within Newport News city limits for free, for the entire summer. This program is funded by Newport News City Council, and cost fifty-cents per ride per youth. A program like this in Hampton may encourage youth to ride the bus over the summer, causing them to become familiar with bus routes in Hampton. Young people may also continue to ride the bus throughout the year.

Goal & Benefits

After reviewing the responses we received from the youth in our community, we found that it is true that young people don't know how to use the city bus. Few young people know how to get to their favorite hangout or the mall by bus.

- The Subcommittee's goal is to increase the youth's level of awareness about the bus system in Hampton. Youth Planners will know that they are successful when the number of youth riders increase and that number stays higher than what it is now.
- Youth represent a very small percentage of the bus riders in Hampton. The youth planners realize this, and so does HRT. The Youth Planners and Youth Commission realize that knowing how to use public transportation is a "life skill" that should be available to every citizen in Hampton. If more people knew how to use the bus maybe they would view it in a positive light and consider it as an alternative means of transportation.

Recommendations

After reviewing all of the information we have received very carefully, with our goals and objectives in mind, the Subcommittee feels that our previous recommendations should be implemented, along with the following ones, to help increase youth awareness of the bus system.

- **Bus stop signs should include the route number and should be colored-coded accordingly. (For example all of the stops for Red Route 1 should have signs that are red with the number 1 printed on it).**

The Subcommittee feels that posting color-coded signs displaying route numbers will make it easier to identify desired stops. Colored coded signs may make bus

riding easier on those individuals who do not regularly ride the bus and those individuals trying to learn.

EXAMPLE: If only Red Route 1 stopped at Pine Chapel Rd. and Coliseum Drive, then the sign would be colored red with a 1 on it. If Red Route 1 and Blue Route 2 stopped on that same corner, half of the sign could be red and have a 1 printed in the red section the other half could be blue with a 2 printed in the blue section. Stacking individual signs is also another possibility of displaying this information.

- **Bus route maps should be included in the community information pages of the phone book along with all fare information and phone numbers.**

Bell Atlantic's Yellow Pages already includes an information section with maps of the peninsula. The Subcommittee feels that by including route maps in the Yellow Pages everyone can have access to these maps without making a special run to the bus station or calling HRT's for a simple question. This map could also include current fares and important phone numbers.

- **Route maps should be posted in all public buildings, including schools, and at all major public bus stops. These maps and HRT pamphlets should also be made available to businesses.**

Posting bus routes and other information in breezeways and lobbies of public buildings that are heavily traveled are a good way to make this information available to a great number of people. Placing this information in highly visible, heavily traveled areas may also help reduce the amount of times these maps are vandalized. These maps and other HRT information should also be available to private businesses for their employees and customers.

- **The Hampton Youth Commission and the City should sponsor a "Ride The Bus Day" for youth**

For one day each year the Hampton Youth Commission and the City could sponsor a special event somewhere in Hampton and arrange to waive bus fare for all youth in the city that day. This would be a great way to expose youth to the bus system, and the chances of only one young person on the bus are greatly reduced. This would help eliminate some of the stereotypes young people have as well a help them to learn the bus routes. The Youth Commission's role would be to help plan the event and spread the word, not a financial responsibility.

School Buses

Research

The Subcommittee found from the surveys and the Youth Commission that, in contrast to the city bus, many students know where the closest school bus stop is in relation to their house. The majority of students also know which bus will take them home.

Students are more knowledgeable of school bus routes and how they operate than they are about the city bus routes and how they run.

The majority of the students we surveyed stated that other students never ask them for advice on what bus to take home. Students seemed to be satisfied with the current school bus system, however some changes to the current school bus systems could help make a good thing even better.

Goals & Benefits

- The Subcommittee, staff, and students feel that making a few minor changes to how school buses operate can eliminate confused students hunting for their rides home.
- The Commission feels that making a few adjustments to some of the students' every day resources can help increase young peoples' awareness of school bus routes and could reduce the amount of parents and friends who get stuck playing taxi.

Recommendations

Research completed by the Youth Planners has shown that young people's knowledge of the school bus system is not a problem, however many young people feel that a few changes would make using the bus system easier and could speed up the loading process. The following are suggestions on how the school bus system could be improved.

- **Distribute Bus Route maps to all students (map that has the location of stops and earliest time the bus would arrive at those stops), through their student planners.**

The student planners are distributed to every student in every public high school in Hampton. Students are usually required to carry these planners with them, and by inserting a bus map, youth will have access to that information at their fingertips.

- **Post bus route maps in places where they are highly visible yet hard to vandalize (inside schools behind a glass case near main exit).**

Maps displaying bus routes have been and are displayed. Unfortunately many are vandalized, making it hard for those who are less familiar with the bus system to get around. The Subcommittee feels that placing the bus route maps in highly visible, hard to vandalize, places, such as lobbies, can increase the life of the posted bus-route maps.

- **School buses should post route numbers in visible places and line up in order if possible.**

School buses already line up from one to however many buses there are. Each bus has a different number and goes to a different location. If a student rides Bus 15, he or she usually starts from the front of the line and counts from one to fifteen, while dodging other students scrambling to find their bus. Posting route numbers on the buses and lining up in order could speed up the loading process and eliminate some confusion.

Thoughts for the future

Staff and the Hampton Youth Commission have found through research that a major reason youth do not ride the bus is because of their fear of the types of individuals on the bus. The current issue was limited to youth's knowledge of the bus system so we could not touch on their perceptions. Staff strongly suggests that young people's attitudes toward the bus system be investigated in the future.

EMPLOYMENT

Are teens knowledgeable about job opportunities in their community?

Research

Teens looking for work may be missing opportunities because they don't know where to look or do not look where jobs are advertised. Planners created a survey and distributed it to every high school in Hampton. These surveys were divided evenly among the Youth Commissioners at each high school and were conducted during their lunch periods. Surveys were also conducted at the Coliseum Mall in the food court.

The Youth Commission held a forum at Alternatives Inc. Planners also spoke with numerous teens in the community.

When we asked teens if they knew about job opportunities in their communities about half of them said no. Yet half of the ones that said no have had a job or are currently employed. These teens had found jobs by asking people such as parents, friends and family for assistance.

Many teens surveyed want jobs but say it is hard to find a job that fits their schedule. Lots of teens participate in sports and other extracurricular activities and feel it is hard to find a job that will be flexible enough to allow them to continue their activities.

When staff looked at the surveys to find out if teens were knowledgeable of job opportunities or not, we found that nearly all of them said they knew who to ask or where to look for a job. When we looked at the teens with no job we found that over half of them also said they knew who to ask or where to look for a job.

Planners concluded that teens rely on others to help them find jobs but this may not make them aware of all their opportunities. At the Youth Commissions forum held April. 26, 1999 we asked what would make finding a job easier. Listed below are the answers we received.

- Place a bulletin board in schools and/or the mall with a list of jobs that may be of interest to teens.
- Having job fairs twice a year.
- Keep school aware of jobs that are of interest to teens.
- School should be made aware of job opportunities that may be of interest to teens.
- Place an insert in the Daily Press that lists jobs that are of interest to teens.
- Jobs should be posted in the school newspapers.
- Teens should have more access to the internet and YouthLink should be advertised (An Internet site on the web created by Alternatives, Inc. for youth containing information about Entertainment, movie reviews, and a local listing of job openings

for teens. It also contains neighborhood news, concert information and message boards for them to get in and talk).

Goals

The Teen Employment Subcommittee's goal is to make youth more aware of job opportunities in their community. Planners will know they are successful when they see an increase in teen employment, and more businesses making an effort to get teens employed.

- Young people feel that there should be a specific place they can go to find information on jobs in their community. Businesses such as Water Country and Bush Gardens hold job fairs at school about once a year. Teens feel that job fairs like these should be held more often.
- Businesses looking to hire youth should advertise in places of teen interest. Teens feel they will have less trouble finding a job if they were to advertise in youth friendly places such as the mall and school newspapers.
By advertising in youth friendly places businesses looking to hire young people would be able to find more workers and teens would be able to find more jobs.
- Schools should be made aware of jobs that teens may be interested in. Most teens attend school every day and by making schools aware of job opportunities you create a convenient source of information that will be utilized by the youth.
- Teens should have more access to the internet. There are many web sites like YouthLink that are dedicated to youth and can help them find out about jobs and other things going on in their communities.

Recommendations

Many teens are able to find jobs but to make it easier on those who are having trouble the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee are recommending the following:

- **Basic job finding skills such as how to fill out an application, what to wear, etc., should be a part of the schools curriculum and could be taught in a mandatory class.**
- **School and mall bulletin boards should contain a list of jobs that teens may be interested in. Malls and schools are places teens go on a daily basis and posting jobs in these places will make finding a job easier.**
- **Newspapers should include a youth column that lists jobs that are of interest to youth. Businesses looking specifically for youth workers should consider advertising in the school newspapers.**

- **Businesses such as Water Country and Bush Gardens hold job fairs in school about once a year. Teens feel job fairs should be held twice a year.**
- **Increase youth access to the Internet and advertise Youth Link.**

The Youth Commission is suggesting the following to insure that the above recommendations are accomplished:

- **The Youth Commission should meet with the superintendent's advisory board to talk about possibly including basic job finding skill in the schools curriculum and to also talk about posting jobs on a bulletin board in school.**
- **The Youth Commission should meet with mall management to talk about possibly posting jobs on a bulletin board in the mall.**
- **The Youth Commission should talk to the Daily Press about placing a teen job column in the newspaper.**
- **The Youth Commission should talk with the Virginia Employment Commission about holding a job fair at the Hampton Convocation Center and or the Coliseum. Youth Link should also be present at the job fair.**

Youth do not have/realize they have appropriate job skills.

Research

The Youth Planners' first task was to clarify what we mean when we say "job skills." Our research identified 3 skill levels:

- Basic work ethics - showing up on time for work, being trustworthy, and respecting co-workers and people's cultural differences.
- Generalized skills – reading, writing, math, and teamwork.
- Specialized skills – operating equipment for a particular job.

Youth Planners and the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee did not limit themselves to just youth input when researching this topic. The Youth Commission held youth forums and ventured into classrooms to speak with students. We also met with local employers who hire teens for part-time jobs to understand their feelings about this topic and asked employers how the youth employees were working out.

The fact is that many of the jobs teens hold are service jobs that require basic level skills. Many employers and managers stated that they "do not expect a young person to know how to do everything", because they understand we are just starting out and have not had much experience. Most employers train new employees how to operate pieces of equipment that are crucial to performing well on the job.

Youth Planners asked employers what they thought basic job skills were. The answers we received from employers and supervisors were different from the responses we received from the youth. Employers stated that the ability to get along with other people is a very important skill. When employers are hiring they look for things like eye contact, enthusiasm, the individual's appearance, honesty, attitude, communication skills, comprehension, dress and maturity level of that person. An employee must show that they possess all of these things during the interview and continue to display this type of behavior while on the job.

A forum held at the Hampton Coliseum Mall revealed that youth did not recognize that these basic "work ethics" were, in fact, job skills. When asked the question "What skills do you have" many young people did not know how to respond, others responded with typing skills and being computer literate. They are right; all of the things they named are job skills. However, no one mentioned showing up on time, calling when you know you will be late, or any of the basic work place manners or ethics employers look for. The youth at the forum believed they were capable of practicing these basic ethics, but agreed that everyone does not realize the importance of these ethics and does not always exercise them. Knowing what good work ethics are and practicing them could mean the difference between getting the job and not getting it, or getting the job and keeping it.

Youth Planners also spoke with Rex Kibler, the coordinator of a program on the Peninsula known as WorkKeys. He explained that many U.S. students are leaving

school with inadequate skills to perform today's jobs. Most jobs require combinations of skills in math, reading, writing, communication, and teamwork. When workers lack these skills, they make their employers and their communities less competitive in the global marketplace. WorkKeys is used by employers world wide to identify the skills employees need to be successful on the job and to determine where additional training will help build a higher performance workforce.

Youth Planners also reviewed a survey conducted by Grant Thornton NAM (National Association of Manufacturers) Center For Workforce Success. These findings are from a broad cross-section of American manufacturers. This report shows that nearly 2/3 of those manufacturers surveyed (63%) said that their current employees are deficient in basic employability skills, such as timeliness, readiness and productivity. Many of these manufacturers would support and encourage more educators to develop and implement programs in public schools that would teach students what is expected of them in the work world and would help employers recruit and train more effectively.

Hampton has such a program. Youth Planners met with Ron A. Holloman, the coordinator of Co-op Tec (Cooperative Technical Education) at Hampton High School. Co-op Tec's course outline consists of :

- Pre-Employment Skills
- Communication on the Job
- Developing Study Skills
- Preparing Positive Working Relationships
- Maintaining Safe Working Conditions
- Balancing a Checkbook
- Developing Computer Literacy

Mr. Holloman is very proud of his class and feels that the young people in the class are learning valuable skills that they need to be successful in a work environment.

Youth Planners also interviewed Mr. Holloman's students in an attempt to find out how youth feel about Co-op Tec and to get their take on the problem statement. Some of the students in this class thought "skills" meant things like knowing how to operate a cash register or being computer literate. Again, students did not associate work ethics with job skills. The reason for youth feeling this way may be because many businesses look upon youth as being incapable of performing certain tasks. One student stated "How will we know if we have job skills if businesses will not give us the opportunity to find out?"

Youth Planners found the statement that businesses look upon youth as being incapable of performing certain tasks to be untrue. It is true that some businesses have age restrictions, and they usually have them for good reasons. Some businesses are looking for responsible fulltime employees with families to ensure that they are getting a responsible, dependable, employee. Other businesses refuse to hire young people because that position will subject the young person to unlawful contact with restricted substances or materials. However, the majority of businesses stated that they do hire

young employees when possible and will train those youth how to operate equipment that is crucial to performing well on the job.

Youth Planners met with Ms. Crenneace Stacy of Youth Works, a program designed to teach youth how to dress for an interview, fill out an application, how to conduct themselves in a place of business, and other important leadership and job skills. This program is open to Suffolk and Hampton youth between the ages of 15 to 21, and also places young people in jobs. Ms. Stacey stated that it is everyone's responsibility – the community, businesses, schools, and parents - to teach and reinforce job skills to youth

From their research, the Subcommittee concluded that:

- (1) Work ethics are considered to be basic skills by employers and are expected of all employees, but they are not considered skills by youth. Young people are capable of practicing these basic skills, but their importance need to be reinforced.
- (2) Some young people do not have the general skills, such as reading, writing, and teamwork, that allow them to be successful. Employers expect their employees to be capable in these areas; they should not have to be trained on the job.
- (3) Employers are willing to provide training for specialized skills.

Goals & Benefits

Since the Subcommittee focused its local research on part-time, high school employment, they conclude that young people are able to practice the basic skills required for these jobs. They also recognize that there is a difference between being able to practice them and actually practicing them. The first efforts, then, should be to reinforce these basic work ethics. Efforts should also be made to provide training for the higher level skills.

- The Subcommittee feels that by making youth more aware of the job skills they possess, more youth will be able to get better paying, more competitive jobs. Youth who know exactly what skills they possess and what tasks they are capable of performing have a better chance of being successful now, and in the future.
- When more youth realize they have these skills and more youth are successfully hired, the communities may begin to view youth in a more positive light.
- If youth recognize the skills they possess when going for an interview, or while on the job, they may be more confident about themselves, and their abilities. This can lead to businesses finding more responsible, high quality employees.

Recommendations

The Hampton Youth Commission's Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee feels that Hampton Youth will become more aware of the job skills they need to possess if the following recommendations are met.

- **The Youth Commission should work with the school system, the Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations to organize job skill workshops at schools, after school hours, preferably with teen friendly businesses.**

Chamber of Commerce is an organization that represents and speaks on behalf of businesses in Hampton. The Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee feels that these businesses could help youth understand what skills “good employees” possess, and help students realize what they are good at. This could make youth more energetic about going out and finding work, and youth may develop a greater sense of self worth. This style of workshop would invite business owners and managers to come into the schools and allow them to meet teachers and students. These workshops could also strengthen the bond between schools, businesses, students and teachers.

- **Encourage continued focus on individual and teamwork skills in the schools.**

In addition to basic work ethics, the schools should focus on those skills identified by employers – math, reading, writing, and teamwork. Employers are looking for people who can work well in a group. Teachers asking students to work together on assignments in class helps those young people develop skills needed to work in a group. The Hampton Youth Commission feels that teachers should continue incorporating these skills in the curriculum.

- **The Youth Commission should support a job skills awareness campaign.**

The previous Youth Employment section recommends that a youth job fair should be held. The Hampton Youth Commission could sponsor or hold a job skills session at this proposed job fair.

A previous employment recommendation was: *“Newspapers should include a youth column that lists jobs that are of interest to youth. Businesses looking specifically for youth workers should consider advertising in the school newspapers. Making a youth job column would help youth locate jobs easier”*. The Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee feels that including a job skills list in the youth job column may help youth realize their full potential, encouraging youth to apply for more challenging jobs.

The Hampton Youth Commission could support a Youth to Youth Mentor program. Young people who have already demonstrated that they have what it takes to succeed in the work world could be used to mentor to other youth. They can express

what job skills are to other young people in a “youth friendly” manner. This program could be run through schools or local community groups.

The Hampton Youth Commission should help encourage community support of youth that demonstrate good work habits. The Hampton Youth Commission could ask for help from community leaders and organizations to complete the above recommendations. As stated previously, it is the responsibility of the whole community to help youth develop and maintain job skills.

Thoughts for the future

One thing that came up a few times during this research is the employer’s attitude. Attitudes toward employees can affect business as well as employees performance on the job. Staff feels that in the future Youth Planners should look at the work environment and how it affects youth.

COMMUNITY INTERACTION

Youth perceive a lack of cooperation/participation from the school system.

Research

In order to find out how young people feel about Community Interaction and the identified problem that youth perceive a lack of cooperation/participation from the school system, we made use of several research methods. A survey about Community Interaction was conducted in the high schools. Young people were asked to complete the surveys so that we could get their opinion on how they view the School System's involvement with the rest of the community. One finding from the survey showed that young people do not see a strong connection between their individual school and their neighborhood. Another popular theme found in the survey was that most youth would like to increase school/community involvement. Young people indicated that they are not usually able to find out what events are to occur in their neighborhood at school and vice versa. From these findings we then tried to identify the type of connection that the school system and the community have now. We found that the connection is weak. There are very few school/neighborhood partnerships in Hampton, but there are three examples.

- Salina Street Neighborhood Center at Tyler Elementary School is an example of a school/neighborhood partnership. Members of the Salina Street neighborhood are permitted to hold a wide variety of activities at the elementary school. They have such events as group meetings, arts and crafts, and sports activities throughout the school year. Meeting at Tyler Elementary allows neighborhood members to come together in a familiar area without having to travel far from their home. The school space that is used lets young people have fun in a positive atmosphere. Allowing the Salina Street group to use the school facility encourages more parental involvement in the school. The school and the community in this area work together in order to create more school/neighborhood peace.
- Another example of cooperation between a school and the community is the partnership between Davis Middle School and the Northampton Community Center. Northampton happens to be attached to one side of Davis. At one time Davis had a student population too large for its classroom capacity. Northampton, which is a city run facility, allowed the school to utilize the classroom space they have during school hours. After school hours the center welcomes the youth from the school to participate in extracurricular activities. Students feel that the community center is an extended part of their school that they can go to for fun and support.
- One other school/neighborhood partnership that has been effective in Hampton is that between the Newtown Neighborhood and Spratley Middle School. Out of their cooperative effort the Newtown Learning Center developed. Newtown Learning Center is a computer-based facility intended to aid middle school age young people

in familiarizing themselves with computer technology. The center also serves the purpose of providing a positive environment for young people after school hours. Neighbors in the Newtown area initiated plans for the Center. The school agreed with Newtown's proposal and together they began the Newtown Learning Center. The neighborhood and the school each receive benefits from their partnership. The neighborhood is a safer and more welcoming area because of it. Some adults were upset when young people in their neighborhood just hung out before the Center was established. Now the youth have a place to go to after school that they enjoy. The neighbors and the school used to get the feeling that others perceived Spratley Middle School as a negative place to send children. People are now much more comfortable with the way they view the school and neighborhood. They can see the support and care that both groups afford the students. The school is able to extend the educational time students have with the Newtown collaboration. They also gain assurance that some of the students are in a safe environment outside of their school building.

By conversing with youth and adults directly involved in the issue we were able to find that youth not only felt a lack of cooperation/participation from the school system, but also from the community. When gathering information on programs that may link the school system and the community it was determined that community centers have little to do with promoting school news or events. The centers did, however, comment that if they are asked to post school information they were willing to. The school system allows the community to use its property, for a monetary fee. Schools charge community groups an hourly rate for use of school space. The school system, however, is willing to wave the fee for certain community groups depending on what they need the space for. The information gathered shows a willingness to work together on the school's and the community's behalf. They just have not come up with a good reason to work together. They seem to believe that they are fine working as separate bodies. The interviews, discussions, and survey indicate that the school system and the community are not communicating well.

If the attitude that most schools and neighborhoods have toward working together does not change, it can only lead to the deterioration of young peoples lives. Each group seems only interested in working with each other if the service benefits only them. Young people see value in the schools and neighborhoods collating to benefit youth needs. If schools and neighborhoods continue not to collaborate young people will most likely continue to view them as separate priorities. Young people will remain loyal to one group instead of spreading their time to many other activities that interest them. If the schools and neighborhoods become allies young people will be afforded the opportunity to become more rounded and responsible people. Youth would much rather be involved in a school/neighborhood partnership that is supportive of them than school involvement and neighborhood involvement that competes with their time. This cannot happen without a partnership.

Benefits

The Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee's goal is to improve young peoples' relationship with the people and places that effect them in Hampton because teens have indicated that they would like to become more involved with the city. Youth spend a large amount of their time in school and in their community. By having schools and neighborhoods connected, young people can see many benefits.

- Holding co-sponsored events for the youth could be a positive outcome of having a school/neighborhood partnership. Young people would be provided with a setting where they could interact with one another in a caring environment. The events could be learning experiences for the youth as well as the adults involved. Viewing the school and community working together can teach youth about fellowship.
- An increase in support, job opportunities, internships, and mentorships for young people could develop from the schools and the neighborhoods partnering. If there is a strong school/neighborhood partnership young people have a better chance to develop close relationships with those adults in their school and their community. Out of these newfound relationships youth could learn to network. Most likely the youth/adult relationships will lead to a variety of opportunities for the youth. Adults will be helping shape a young person's life for the better. Getting to know more people in the community and school system provides youth with more support. Some people involved in the community do not have children and therefore have fewer reasons to interact with youth. A partnership would increase youth presence in community events and these adults would get to work with young people. Young people will have an opportunity to show adults how dedicated and helpful they can be. Adults will start to value young people more. The relationships will start a cycle of youth/adult partnerships in the community. Adults will see an improvement in their community. With the bond with adults in their neighborhood, youth will engage in positive activities. Having the youth and adults both care about the community will increase the number of residents. Youth/adult partnerships will make Hampton an overall better place to live.
- A strong school/neighborhood partnership can create and improve bonds between families and increase parental involvement in schools. Instead of the student and parent being interested in totally different things, they would share an interest in having a good community. Having the schools and neighborhoods partner would influence parents to become more involved in both because their children are participating. There would be an increase in programs that involve persons of all ages in the community, therefore creating an opportunity for youth and parents to come together and do something that interests them both. By working together parents and children may find that they have more in common than they realize. From working with the community, parents may eventually migrate more into their child's learning environment. Familiarity increases comfort for people.
- A value of having a school/neighborhood bond is the sharing of information and resources from each involved group. Young people want to be able to go to their school building and find out what event is going to take place in their neighborhood.

They also want to go to a close by community center and see advertisements for things that take place at their school. If resources are shared young people will most likely have better programming. The schools along with the community can combine to provide materials that could enhance young people's learning and fun environment. The sharing of resources could lead to a stronger bond between the schools and community.

- Support for youth activities from the school as well as the community is important. Instead of separate support for youth events there can be a significant increase in support by having both the school and community working together to help youth. Young people like to feel that people other than their families care for and support them in their activities. If youth receive this attention there are more likely to do better at whatever they are attempting to accomplish.
- Safer neighborhoods and schools would come out of having the schools and neighborhoods partner. An increase in people who care about youth would come out of the strong school/neighborhood connection. By having more people caring about the school and neighborhood there would be an increase in safety precautions. More people would take care of the neighborhood if they believe they had a reason to. Young people will show the adults that there is a value in having a safe, strong school by proving to be productive, participating citizens.
- Better schools mean better neighborhoods. Better neighborhoods mean better schools. When choosing a neighborhood most people look at the school in the area that they are moving to as a factor in their choice to purchase the property. People feel comfortable when they know that their children are receiving the best education possible. If the school is well liked, the better the chance people will buy property in that particular neighborhood. Usually schools that are viewed as 'the best' are located in nice neighborhoods. A lot of people that live in nice neighborhoods give back to the young people in their community, creating more resources for youth to utilize. Better schools and neighborhoods mean better youth.

Recommendations

Due to the results from the research conducted, the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee recommends the following in order to improve cooperation/participation from the school system as well as the community.

- **Discussions should be started.**

The school system and the different entities that compose the community are not talking. In order to create a healthy partnership, the schools, neighborhoods,

businesses, and other community bodies need to begin to communicate on a higher level. Young people see their neighborhoods as much more than just houses. They say neighborhoods consist of churches, businesses, and other places that they frequent. Each group needs to investigate the opportunities of having a partnership with one another. In order to have a successful plan of action, youth need to be involved in all discussions and decisions. Young people feel that bringing their school and community together will lead to their betterment. Youth believe that all discussions between youth, the schools, and the community should lead to individualized answers. One uniform plan will not be successful for every school or neighborhood. Each school and neighborhood should make a plan to increase their communication in order to benefit the youth.

In order to start the discussions, the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee recommends that the Youth Commission take the lead in defining and building partnerships between the different groups. They had the idea to start the discussions by inviting participants from the schools, businesses, neighborhoods, and churches to a meeting or series of meetings at one of the area high schools. Some possible discussion topics may be:

- school/neighborhood safety,
- school/neighborhood improvement projects,
- mentorship activities between the groups, and
- how the entities can share resources (sharing strengths with one another in order to overcome weaknesses)

The Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee recommends that the Youth Commission make this activity a priority for the 1999-2000 school year.

- **There should be an increase in support for the In-SYNC Partnerships.**

In-SYNC stands for Innovations for Schools, Youth and families, Neighborhoods, and Communities. This City program is dedicated to improve the communication between the school system and community. The program sees three outcomes if this is done:

- view better student performance,
- have a positive perception of schools by parents, neighbors, students, and the community, and
- have successful youth

In-SYNC looks for groups that support schools and youth to be a part of the partnership. All programs that stem from In-SYNC must involve the entire community. According to In-SYNC the planning, design, and implementation of programs should include parents, youth, school staff, neighborhood associations, businesses, non-profits, city services, and other concerned community members. In-SYNC Partnerships offers to support existing programs along with assisting the implementation of new ones. In-SYNC will act as a link between the organizations, like Schools and City Government, and evaluate the efficiency of the partnership. Because the In-SYNC Partnership shares so many of the ideas of the youth, the

Subcommittee recommends that the Youth Commission back the program with support. The information gained from the In-SYNC Partnership may also aid the Youth Commission in carrying out the recommendation to hold discussions. Because the In-SYNC Partnership has so much in the way of resources and help to offer to youth, the Subcommittee recommends that the Youth Commission encourage In-SYNC to involve young people in linking the schools and community. Young people should be a partner in the relationship, not just a group that they look to for advice.

- **Support the Capital Improvement Plan recommendation for a new community center.**

Young people have said that they think that there should be another Community Center in Hampton. The Community Center should be attached to one of the area schools. A Community Center attached to a school will provide the community with a space where adults, youth, the school system, and the community can interact on common ground. The recommendation in the Capital Improvement Plan allows for this type of facility to be built in Hampton. The Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee recommends that the Youth Commission endorse any effort to start the process of building the facility. The Subcommittee also would like the Youth Commission to have input into planning the community center to ensure that it strengthens school/community partnerships.

Youth perceive a need to improve involvement in youth/adult partnerships to benefit the entire community.

Research

Youth perceive a need to improve the participation of youth and adults working together as partners in the City and increase the number of partnerships. To find out how young people felt about involvement in youth/ adult partnerships, Youth Planners and the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee conducted a survey at all four high schools and two private schools in the City of Hampton. Eighty-three percent of the youth that took the survey agreed that it is important for young people and adults to work well together. However, only 29% of the young people who took the survey felt that young people and adults in Hampton currently work well together. From talking to youth and adults in the City we have found that most adults and young people already have prejudices from their first impressions about each other. Sixty-seven percent of the surveyed youth felt that these could be overcome if people were given the chance to work together.

The next step was to interview existing youth/adult partnerships that the Comprehensive Plan Subcommittee felt had a positive effect on the City of Hampton. We interviewed partnerships that work with Alternatives, Inc., a private organization that helps build youth leadership in the community, as well as partnerships that do not. The partnerships interviewed were Newtown, Salina Street, Vision Point, and Youth Community Policing Effort. All of the groups that were interviewed were asked the following questions:

1. What good has come out of your partnership?
2. What didn't work well?
3. If you could do it all over again what would you change or do different?
4. Are youth an active partner? If not would you consider making them one?
5. How have the adults benefited?
6. How have the youth benefited?
7. Adults - Why do you think it's important to work with the young people?
8. Young People - Why do you think it is important to work with the adults?

We found that the environment that facilitates successful partnerships was not only youth-friendly, but adult-friendly too. The adults and youth both said that they learned to overcome any stereotypes that they may have had about each other, and they felt they had brought youth and adults together in the community. We were repeatedly told that the adults view the youth as resources and that youth were seen as assets to the community.

Most young people felt empowered because they were given the chance to take action and gain leadership skills, as well as develop into a positive young person. The young people also told us that they cared more about their community because they were involved in what was going on. They did not just receive the benefits of a program put together by the adults, they were actually part of putting together the programs. Young

people felt that working with adults had enhanced their self-esteem and that they were doing something fun without getting into trouble. They also said they were exposed to adults who really care about them. Young people told us repeatedly that it was important for them to work with adults because the adults know more about life and have more experience, something a young person does not yet possess. Also the youth viewed the adults as a resource to help get things done that young people may not necessarily be able to do alone.

The adults that worked in these partnerships feel it is important to work with youth to better guide their future, especially since youth are the City's future. Other adults said they wanted to work with the youth to understand them better and get their input and opinions on certain ideas.

All of the partnerships that were interviewed were very successful, some more so than others, but all were very beneficial to the youth as well as the adults. In some partnerships it took a while before the adults would treat the youth as resources instead of recipients. This is an ongoing struggle but it is also an area of growth. The partnerships that worked with Alternatives seem to work at a faster pace. This may be because of the professional assistance of adults who work with young people continuously.

A youth forum was held to gather more input. Participants gave a variety of reasons why there are not more youth/adult partnerships. Youth admitted teen pressure often discourages community involvement. Some young people may choose to follow the crowd instead of doing what they know is right. For example, if all his or her friends want to go to the movies, the young person would probably make the choice to skip a community activity meeting. This especially happens if someone says that that activity is "dumb" or "stupid", and that the young person should go with him or her. It was said that benefits and the opportunities that come from the community involvement are not well advertised.

Once again, the forum participants told us that youth feel stereotyped by the adults and that they also have some prejudgments towards the adults. They believe that the media also plays a part in this by over-exaggerating bad situations. Some adults are afraid to work with the youth and some young people are afraid to work with adults too. Youth feel that adults don't understand them. Young people told us that they want a "link" with the adults in their community, but they are not always given the chance.

The Subcommittee agrees that there is a need to expand involvement in youth/adult partnerships. Young people and adults can work together if they overcome some prejudgments that they may have of each other, and if they work together in an environment that is people-friendly. An environment that is people-friendly is pleasing to adults as well as the youth; therefore it benefits the entire community. Many youth are not aware of the rewards that come from working with adults, and teen pressure is a major factor in how young people choose to spend their time. Some young people feel they are not given the chance to work with adults.

Goals & Benefits

The Subcommittee's goals are to increase involvement in existing youth/adult partnerships and to expand the number of partnerships. Achieving these goals could provide the following benefits to the entire community. These benefits directly relate to the *40 Developmental Assets* that the community is attempting to develop for our youth in order to build a stronger community.

- *Other adult relationships* and *adult role models* will help youth and adults have better perceptions of each other. There are a lot of adults in our communities that have already decided not to work with young people because of past experiences or something they may have seen on television; this is an example of prejudice. Some adults simply don't see the need to work with the youth. There are also a lot of youth that don't want to work with adults because they too have some prejudices. Some youth don't believe that they are viewed as community resources. A lot of the youth who know they can be a resource think that adults don't want to work with them. When adults consistently interact with youth in a positive manner, they are providing the youth with a *positive role model*.
- Youth would have a *positive view of their personal future* because they would be better prepared to enter the workforce. Through these partnerships, young people gain lots of knowledge, as well as experiences that can be useful later in life.
- Youth that have developed *responsibility* and youth that *serve others* would be more likely to get involved in their community when they are older, because of the exposure to community service from their youth. It seems that most people who are involved in their communities care more about their city. Therefore, even when they get older they are more likely to come back to the city they care about and continue their involvement as good adult citizens.
- Young people can develop a *sense of purpose* when they are involved in youth/adult partnerships. This enhances their *self-esteem* and gives them *personal power* to be more productive once they become adults. When youth are exposed to *positive youth/adult partnerships* they may receive opportunities that can help them in their futures. Scholarships, job-opportunities, and other benefits can result from being involved with positive youth/adult partnerships. The opportunities that are available from community services and other volunteer projects can be very rewarding and increase the youth productiveness.
- Some of the "nothing to do" issues under the Youth Space portion of this Plan may not be as big a problem for the City if we had more partnerships, because youth would have other ways to occupy their time. There would be fewer complaints about having nothing to do if youth and adults worked together more often. Adults could help create activities for youth and working as partners would take some of the young person's time.

- There could be a decrease in violence. When young people are involved with their community, they care about their community. When they care they have more respect and are less likely to do things that are disruptive to their environment or get involved with negative factors.
- More adults would listen to youth, therefore more youth would *care* about the City. The *community would value youth*. When young people know someone cares about what they have to say, they care about giving their opinions. If they know they play an effective role in the community, they may care more about the City.
- There would be more *creative activities* and ideas, and more resources available to the community if young people and adults work well together. Adults have experience and youth tend to be motivating. Youth have a different perspective on things than adults, therefore when the two work together instead of alone, the best results are brought about. Youth would be more focused and develop a *positive view of their personal future*. Youth would have better priorities in life and become more focused on their futures, life, school, and other important factors in their life. They would make better decisions as well.
- Youth would continue to give *service to others*. Young people are more likely to give back to the community when they become adults because they will remember what it was like when someone gave to them, and how it benefited them. They, in turn, will want to give this to another generation.

Recommendations

Given the potential benefits the community gains by implementing these youth/adult partnerships, the Subcommittee offers the following ideas as “keys to success” in strengthening existing partnerships, increasing partnership opportunities and increasing participation:

- **Partnerships need to have a meaningful purpose.**

If the partnership isn’t doing something that is of importance or interest to the community it will not be successful. It may not attract the involvement of the youth or the adults in the community. The whole purpose of a partnership should be to accomplish a meaningful benefit for the community. Partnerships should not be formed with youth because they are meeting a quota or because it looks good. If this is the case, the partnership will not be successful because young people can see through this better than adults. If the purpose of the partnership changes, make sure everyone involved is aware of, and involved in, that change.

- **Roles and expectations of all youth/adult partnership members should be clear and beneficial to all.**

Identify what the members can expect from each other and what they can gain from each other. All partners should have a mutual understanding of expectations. They should also recognize the benefits of the partnership to the others involved. Shared expectations and benefits help create a “people-friendly” environment.

- **Partnerships should advertise to youth and adults through schools, churches, YMCA, civic groups, PTAs, churches and other sources as well as their own existing memberships.**

The members are the best source to advertise the partnership. If they don't do this then it may not be as successful. Youth advertise better to youth because they know what each other's wants are, and the same holds true for adults. Remember advertising needs to match its market. It needs to attract the target market.

- **Partnerships should take on a visible event, possibly social, that would interest potential members.**

When something can be seen out in the public eye it attracts more people than an indoor meeting. Social events tend to be more fun and will attract the youth as well as the adults. Keep the event in line with the meaningful purpose.

- **The partnership should be open to suggestions, reevaluation, and change if necessary.**

The partnerships cannot be afraid of changes. In order to benefit the entire community the partnership has to accommodate the needs of the youth as well of the adults, and it needs to be receptive to the public opinion of how to go about doing this.

- **The Youth Commission encourages and supports additional training efforts by private and public organizations to develop effective youth/adult partnerships.**

Training should include these suggested guidelines, and should be made available throughout the community to reach as many youth and adults as possible.

- **The Youth Commission should continue to facilitate youth/adult interaction and advocate for new youth/adult partnerships.**

Opportunities exist through the mini-grant programs to match youth groups with adult sponsors. These sponsorships can grow into true youth/adult partnerships over time. Through their liaison relationships with other City boards and commissions, Youth Commissioners can identify community organizations that would benefit from youth participation, and build new partnerships. In their role as Commissioners they show these organizations the value of a youth voice and the power of youth participation.

